

PASSENGER DUTIES ON RAILWAYS.—From a return made to the House of Commons in the course of last session, it appears that the railroads in England and Wales, and in the Channel Islands, in the year ending January 5, 1843, no less than 152,663,134.04d., or passenger duty. The augmenting increase of railway traffic within the last ten years may be gathered from the fact, that in the year ending January, 1833, the whole sum paid to Government as passenger duty was 6397, 16s. 10d. The amount paid in the year ending January, 1842, was 149,204, 13s. 10d. In Scotland, in the year ending January last, 20 railroads paid 15,125, 1s. 6d., being an increase of 3,468, 0s. 11d. over the preceding year. The gross amount paid by all the railroads in the kingdom during the last year was 161,786, 11s. 7d. The amount paid in the previous year was 159,861, 14s. 6d., showing an increase in 1842 of 1,925, 0s. 11d. The ten railroads having termini in London paid 82,417, 4s. 5d.; the three largest amounts being paid by the London and Birmingham, the Great Western, and the South-Western, which paid respectively 25,940, 14s. 14s. 23s. 011s. 7d., and 12,043, 19s. 7d., or more than two-fifths of the whole amount.

STEAM PLOUGH ON LORNA MOSS.—This machine, which has occupied so much public attention in Dumfries for twelve months past, is now completed, under Mr. W. J. Curtis's management, and fully realises all that was expected from it. The plough, governed by the peculiar apparatus invented by Mr. Curtis, is so constructed as to be the most perfect machine and the ploughman or steersman, seated on the plough, draws a furrow so straight, that no ploughman on the most favourable soil could surpass it. The moss is exceedingly soft, and full of holes and hillocks alternately; but notwithstanding this, the plough passes over the surface as majestically as if it were a field of corn. The result is likewise due to an improvement made in the figure of the plough by Mr. Curtis. A beautiful contrivance, also the invention of Mr. Curtis, is employed for reeling the wire rope upon the drum, by which the rope, although weighing on the aggregate upwards of a ton weight, is coiled up as evenly and easily as a single strand of a single rope. The next step in the progress of the Lorna Moss lands, viz., laying the subsoil upon the surface of the ploughed and levelled moss—an idea due to the intelligence of Mr. Curtis—will not proceed with; when the county of Dumfries, as well as the kingdom generally, will have reason to congratulate itself upon one of the most important and useful applications of mechanics to the wants of society which the history of science can furnish.—*Correspondent of the Dumfries Herald.*

SCHEUTERS FOR STEAM.—La Reforme announces that an operative at Ruel has discovered a substitute for steam. The experiment is to be made in a few days on the Versailles railroad. "Figure to yourself," says the *Reforme*, "an enormous wheel, five yards in diameter, the spokes of which place a bar, with its rider. This large wheel being fixed on four ordinary wheels, placed on the rails of a railroad, it is sufficient to turn the large wheel to make the carriage advance. But what motive force does the inventor employ? It is the horse placed in the interior of the wheel, and yoked, by means of two bars of iron placed perpendicularly under the axle. The horse, by drawing, causes the wheel to turn in the same manner as a mouse or a squirrel in a cage. In order to permit the horse to enter into this singular wheel, it has been found necessary to dig an excavation near the station of the railroad, into which the horse is let down. The inventor pretends that he can modify his wheel so as to admit three horses, and that, in this case, the heaviest train may be propelled along a railroad with a velocity more rapid than that caused by steam."

ACTS OF PARLIAMENT.—By a return made during the session, it appears that from the year 1824 to 1842, both inclusive, no fewer than 2,151 Acts of Parliament were passed, of which 913 were public Acts, and 1,238 local, personal, and private. Last year was the largest number, there being 123 public Acts, and 172 local, personal, and private. Of the Acts passed in the session of 1842, one related to Scotland, seven to Great Britain, fifty-three to Great Britain and Ireland, and twenty-one to Ireland, of the public Acts, whilst twenty-one of the others related to Scotland, twenty-seven to Great Britain and Ireland, and eight to Ireland. More Acts were passed in 1842 than in any other session since the year 1831; there were 294.

LONDON DOCK COMPANY.—At the last half-yearly meeting of the proprietors of this company, held at the Dock-office, New Bank-buildings, it appeared that the revenue of the company for the last half-year, including wharfage and other dues, amounted to 157,168, 15s. 7d., and the expenditure 108,568, 9s. 5d., a dividend of two per cent. was declared.

ANCIENT AND PRESENT STATE OF THE CITY OF LONDON.—We quote the following interesting passage from Mr. Macaulay's writings, on the subject of the present state of the city of London, compared with its former state:—"The city, properly so called, now consists, in a great measure, of immense warehouses and counting-houses, which are frequented by traders and their clerks during the day, and left in almost total solitude during the night. It was then (in former days), closely inhabited by 300,000 of the persons to whom it was merely a place of business, but a place of constant residence. This great capital had as complete a civil and military organization as if it had been an independent republic. Each citizen had his company, and the companies, which now seem to exist only for the sake of speculators and antiquaries, were the formidable brotherhoods, the members of which were almost as closely bound together as the members of a Highland clan. How valuable these artificial ties were, the numerous and valuable legacies anciently bequeathed by citizens to their corporations abundantly prove. The municipal offices were filled by the most opulent and respectable merchants of the capital. The pomp of the municipal machinery of the city was inferior only to that which surrounded the person of the sovereign. The Londoners lived their city with that patriotic love which is found only in small communities like those of ancient Greece, or like those which arose in Italy in the middle ages. The numbers, the intelligence, the wealth of the citizens, the democratic form of their local government, and their vicinity to the Court and Parliament, made them one of the most formidable bodies in the kingdom."

CHURCH EXTENSION.—On Monday, the 8th inst., the venerable Archdeacon Sinclair laid the first stone of the new church of St. John's, Kensington. The site of the church is on an eminence opposite to Notting-hill, where the "Hippodrome" is projected. The site is large, and commands a view of the whole surrounding country. The building will be in the Pointed style of architecture, and if the funds prove sufficient, will include a tower surmounted by a spire. Provision will be made for the accommodation of 1,500 persons. On Sunday last the archdeacon opened for divine service the new school in the school-room of the church of St. John's, preparatory to the erection of another church for the north-western portion of the parish.

MOLIERE.—The monument erected to Moliere, in the Rue de Richelieu, is to be inaugurated, the 13th inst., under the auspices of M. de Rambuteau, Prefect of the Department of the Seine. Four speeches are to be delivered on the occasion, the first by M. de Rambuteau, the second by M. Etienne, in the name of the French Academy, the third by M. Samson, as representative of the actors of the French Theatre, and the last by M. P. Arago, the president of the committee of subscription for the monument. All the members of the Institute, the municipal councillors of Paris, and deputations from all the dramatic and literary societies and institutions are to attend at the ceremony.

FICTITIOUS BROTHERS.—All the deceptions practiced on the public, in connection with the fine arts, are far surpassed by a new invention of forming figures, groupes, &c., in zinc, which, being brought into the appearance of real bronze, while the malleability of the material renders their formation so easy, that a figure thus produced would cost but fifty shillings, while one cast in brass would cost thirty guineas. Several collectors, both here and in Glasgow, Dublin, Liverpool, and Manchester, and, indeed, in most of the provincial towns, have been taken in by these figures. The appearance of such a genuine appearance, that they can only be known by their lightness and the ease with which they can be bent.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.—At the Committee meeting of the Huntingdonshire Education Board, on Tuesday last, grants were made in aid of building schools in the following places:—Abbotsey, 301; Great Stubby, 201; King's Ripton, 301; Great Geddington (for a Sunday School), 51. A committee was appointed to prepare a form of questions to be sent to the different clergy having schools in connection with the Board, respecting the average attendance and state of their schools. The secretaries were also requested to apply to those members of the Board who have received assistance towards the directors and managers, that in one street alone, there were no less than thirteen families some portion of whom are suffering from fever.

PUBLIC HEALTH.—It appears that on account of a want of proper draining at Kentish Town, an alarming epidemic prevails there. It was stated last week, at a meeting of the St. Pancras board of directors and managers, that in one street alone, there were no less than thirteen families some portion of whom are suffering from fever.

MENIFICENT BEQUEST.—Dr. Beck with, senior physician of York, recently deceased, has bequeathed his ample fortune in aid of the various charities and public institutions in this city. During his lifetime he made the generous donation of 2,000, to the funds of Dame Middleton's Hospital in Skeldergate, and by his will has bequeathed more than 40,000.

Yorkshire Philosophical Society.....	£10,000
York Dispensary.....	2,000
Parish of St. Mary, Bishopthorpe.....	2,000
and Bishopthorpe Junior, St. Mary, St. Martin-le-Grand, each 200l., the interest to be applied to the purchase of coats at Christmas.....	600
Wilberforce School for the Blind.....	5,000
Church of England Sunday Schools in Parishes and Townships.....	1,000
Blue Coat Boys' School.....	2,000
Grey Coat Girls' School.....	2,000
Infant School out of Skeldergate Postern Dean and Chapter of York for a NEW PRIZE OF RELIGION, AND THE MAINTENANCE TO REPAIR THE CHURCH-WARDEN'S HOUSE.....	5,000
York Charity Trustees, in augmentation of St. Thomas' Hospital, out of Micklegate-lane.....	2,000

FOR THE FOUNDATION OF A PENITENTIARY IN YORK.—..... 5,000
Some time since, the late Sir John Legard, under 5,000, are appointed trustees by the will of the testator's personal estate, from which it is probable they will derive further considerable benefit.

CONDITION OF THE LABOURING CLASSES IN ENGLAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES OF EUROPE.—We are on the whole induced to think, that the labouring classes of this island, though they have their grievances and distress, some produced by the war, and some by the depression of the market, are on the whole better off as to physical comforts than the inhabitants of any equally extensive district of the whole world. For this very reason suffering is more acutely felt and more loudly bewailed here than elsewhere. The distress which has lately been experienced in the northern part of the island, is not so general as in some of the most prosperous regions of Europe, surpassing, as we have been rightly informed, any thing which has of late years been known among us. In Norway and Sweden the peasantry are constantly compelled to mix bread with their bread; and even this expedient has not always preserved whole families and neighbourhoods from perishing by famine. The rate of subsistence to which the labouring classes are reduced in the kingdom of the Netherlands is miserably low, and very far inferior to the English paupers. No distress which the people here have endured for centuries approaches that to which has been felt by the French in our own day. The beginning of the year 1817 was a time of great distress in this island. But the state of the lowest classes here was luxury compared with that of the people of France. We find in "Mejend's Journal de Physiologie Experimentale," a paper on a point of physiology connected with the distress of that country, that the quantity of food in the departments were reduced first to oatmeal and potatoes, and at last to nettles, bean-stalks, and other kinds of herbage fit only for cattle; that when the next harvest enabled them to eat barley bread, many of them died from intemperance indulgence in what they thought an exquisite repast; and that a drop of a peculiar description was produced by the hard fare of the year. A surgeon dissected six of these, and found the stomach shrunk, and filled with the unwholesome aliment which hunger had driven man to share with beasts.—*Essays by the Right Hon. T. A. Macaulay.*

ADHERENTS OF TIMBER.—At one of the sectional meetings of the British Association, Mr. Eschen has exhibited a table of the properties of wood, and the power which they possess to resist a force tending to crush them. The following are a few of the principal woods, and number of pounds which they would sustain on the square inch, without sinking under the pressure. The weight was applied in all instances in the direction of the fibres. Yellow pine, 5,325 lbs.; cedar, 5,674 lbs.; red deal, 5,748 lbs.; poplar, not quite dry, 4,307 lbs.; green larch, wet, 2,501 lbs.; green larch, dry, 5,568 lbs.; plum tree, green, 5,561 lbs.; beech, rather green, 7,733 lbs.; beech, dry, 9,363 lbs.; dry oak, 9,363 lbs.; English oak, 5,561 lbs.; Spanish mahogany, 5,198 lbs.; elm, 10,331 lbs.; box, from 9,363 to 10,000 lbs.; kingwood, 12,645 lbs.

COST OF FUNERALS.—It is estimated that the probable annual expense of the total number of funerals in England and Wales, is 4,871,493, taking the average expense of the funerals of the gentry at 100l. for adults, and 30l. for children; tradesmen of the first class at 40l. and 17l.; of the second class at 27l. 10s. and 10l. 10s.; artisans, &c., 5l. and 11l. 10s.; and paupers, 13s.